

## REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-26 are pending. These claims are unchanged.

In the Office Action, the claims were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by Agraharam et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,508). This rejection is not supported by the cited art and should be withdrawn for the reasons below.

Claim 1 is drawn to a method for defining a virtual domain in an electronic messaging system. In particular, claim 1 recites:

defining a virtual domain node corresponding to a real domain name server in a hierarchically organized directory wherein the hierarchically organized directory is a hierarchical structure that resembles a tree with one major branch at the top and many branches and sub-branches below; and

associating a plurality of virtual domain attributes to the virtual domain node. (Emphasis added.)

The Office Action asserts on page 2, paragraph 3, that Agraharam teaches defining a virtual domain node in the form of a “recipient alias telephone number email address telephone#@domain\_name.” On the contrary, Agraharam fails to disclose or suggest “defining a virtual domain node,” as recited in claim 1. Instead, Agraharam only describes a routing function in which an email message can be redirected from one address to another. Agraharam only discloses a routing table in the form of a database 117 which a translation server 110 accesses to translate email message addresses from an alias email address to an actual email address (col. 1, lines 39-58; col. 4, lines 45-50). The method of claim 1, on the other hand, provides for “defining a virtual domain node.”

By defining a virtual domain node, as recited in claim 1, this enables “associating a plurality of virtual domain attributes to the virtual domain node,” as also recited in claim 1. This additional feature of claim 1 is not disclosed or suggested by Agraharam, because Agraharam fails to disclose or suggest “defining a virtual domain node” in the first place. The description of “PINs” by Agraharam (col. 7, lines 15-30) is not relevant to the claimed feature of “virtual



domain attributes” associated with the “virtual domain node,” as recited in claim 1. Instead, the PINs described by Agraharam are associated with a user, allowing the user to access the system and manage the user’s account (col. 7, lines 16-27). In short, Agraharam only teaches an email routing or cross-reference function. Agraharam fails to disclose or suggest defining a virtual domain node,” and “associating a plurality of virtual domain attributes to the virtual domain node,” as recited in claim 1. Therefore, Agraharam does not anticipate claim 1, and cannot support a rejection of claim 1 under 35 USC § 102(e). This rejection should be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2, 3, 5-13, 15, 16, and 17 are dependent upon claim 1 and are, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Independent claims 4, 18 and 26 each incorporate similar features as claim 1 and are, therefore, patentable for similar reasons as claim 1.

Dependent claims 19-24 are dependent upon claim 18 and are, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 18.

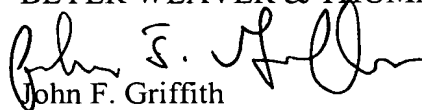
### CONCLUSION

In view of the above Amendments and Remarks, Applicant submits that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that a further telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicant’s attorney can be reached at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

  
John F. Griffith  
Registration No. 44,137

P.O. Box 778  
Berkeley, CA 94704-0778  
(510) 843-6200